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/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) BOTSWANA (BC), MOZAMBIQUE (MZ), SOUTH
AFRICA (SA).

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SUBJ: BEITBRIDGE-BULAWAYO RAILWAY
PROJECT/MAPUTO CORRIDOR (U)WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT
FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT IS CLASSIFIED~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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DOI: (U) 980600.

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(U) B. BUSINESS HERALD, ENGLISH, PUBLISHED WEEKLY,
980521~~(C)~~ C. THE ZIMBABWE INDEPENDENT, PUBLISHED WEEKLY,
970912 (RETRIEVED FROM INTERNET)SUMMARY: (C) PRESIDENT ((MUGABE)) ANNOUNCED THE
OFFICIAL START OF THE 1.5 BILLION MILLION ZIM DOLLAR
(83 MILLION USD) BEITBRIDGE TO BULAWAYO RAILWAY PROJECT
9805 TO BE COMPLETED UNDER JOINT VENTURE BY THE
NATIONAL RAILWAYS OF ZIMBABWE AND THE LIMPOPO PROJECTS
(PVT) LTD.

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TEXT: 1. ~~(C)~~ THE BEITBRIDGETO BULAWAYO RAILWAY PROJECT
WILL PROVIDE A DIRECT LINE BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES. THE
CONSTRUCTION WILL CONSIST OF LAYING A NEW 150-KILOMETER
LINE BETWEEN BEITBRIDGE AND WEST NICHOLSON, UPDATING AN

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EXISTING 167-KILOMETER LINE BETWEEN WEST NICHOLSON AND HEANY JUNCTIONS AND UPGRADING THE 20-KILOMETER SECTION FROM COLLEEN BAWN TO WEST NICHOLSON AS WELL AS REBUILDING SECTIONS OF THE 56-KILOMETER RAIL BETWEEN MBALABALA AND HEANY JUNCTION.

2. ~~(C)~~ THE RAILWAY PROJECT WILL LINK THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITIES (SADC) BUSIEST BORDER TOWN IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (BEITBRIDGE) TO ZIMBABWE'S RAILWAY NERVE-CENTER CITY OF (BULAWAYO).

3. ~~(C)~~ THE VENTURE IS BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE LIMPOPO PROJECTS (PVT) LTD AND THE NATIONAL RAILWAYS OF ZIMBABWE UNDER THE BUILD-OPERATE-TRANSFER AGREEMENT. THUS THE PROJECT WOULD BE HANDED OVER TO THE GOVERNMENT AFTER 30 YEARS.

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1. ~~(C)~~ THE PROJECT IS RUNNING ABOUT EIGHT MONTHS BEHIND SCHEDULE. IN 1970 CONSTRUCTION HAD BEEN APPROVED, HOWEVER DUE TO LACK OF FUNDING CONSTRUCTION WAS PUT OFF UNTIL 1986. THE RAILLINK SHOULD INCREASE EXPORT AND IMPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ZIMBABWE. SADC PEACEKEEPING LOGISTICS EFFORTS WILL ALSO BE INCREASED. MOST COUNTRIES UNDER SADC DO NOT HAVE AIR LIFT SUPPORT FOR HEAVY EQUIPMENT, AND OFTEN ROAD MARCHES OF GREAT DISTANCES WITH THE DATED EQUIPMENT, COMBINED WITH POOR ROAD CONDITIONS, PLAY HAVOC IN DEPLOYING TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT GREAT DISTANCES. THE RAIL CONNECTION SHOULD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN SADC MILITARIES.

2. (U) THE RAIL PROJECT IS COMING AT A TIME WHEN MOZAMBIQUE, BOTSWANA, NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA ARE ALL INCREASING THEIR TRANSCONTINENTAL HIGHWAY CAPABILITIES. SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT NELSON ((MANDELA)) AND MOZAMBIQUE PRESIDENT ((CHISSANO)) IN 1986 ON THE BORDER OF THE TWO COUNTRIES UNVEILED A PLAQUE COMMEMORATING THE START OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE 440-KILOMETER MAPUTO

CORRIDOR TOLL ROAD WHICH WILL CONNECT THE MOZAMBIQUE PORT TOWN OF MAPUTO TO WITBANK IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE CORRIDOR IS SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED IN 2001. THE CORRIDOR, BESIDES LINKING MAPUTO WITH WITBANK, OFFERS GOOD ROAD CONNECTIONS TO JOHANNESBURG AND ON THROUGH BOTSWANA TO WINDHOEK AND WALVIS BAY ON NAMIBIA'S ATLANTIC COAST - A TRANSCONTINENTAL HIGHWAY OF MORE THAN 2,500 KMS.

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